

## Message Text

SECRET

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71

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 071150 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1287

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL JEC FRANCE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

S E C R E T SAIGON 7967

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS, VN

SUBJECT: VISIT TO HANOI OF GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL

1. MR BERENDONCK, WHO IS HEAD OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA DEPARTMENT OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICER BONN CALLED ON ME TODAY ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR VON ROM. ALTHOUGH WE THOUGHT HE WAS COMING TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM HE INSTEAD GAVE A LONG PRESENTATION ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO HANOI.

2. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS.

MR BERENDONCK HAD BEEN MOST IMPRESSED BY THE PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE IN HANOI. LIKE OTHER VISITORS HE WAS STRUCK BY THE SIMPLE WAY OF LIFE OF THE CITIZENRY AND THEIR APPARENT WELL BEING. HE SAID THAT ACCOUNTS OF THE DEC BOMBING HAD GIVEN A GROSSLY DISTORTED PICTURE OF THE DAMAGE INFLICTED ON HANOI. AS A GERMAN HE HAD EXPECTED TO SEE DAMAGE COMPARABLE TO THAT INFLICTED ON THE GERMAN CITIES IN WORLD WAR II, BUT IN FACT HANOI HAD BEEN SCARCELY TOUCHED. HE HAD

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BEEN GREATLY IMPRESSED BY THE ACCURACY OF U. S. BOMBING AND NOTED THAT THE BAC MAI HOSPITAL HAD BEEN VERY NEAR TO A MILITARY TARGET. MR BERENDONCK SAID THAT HE DETECTED VERY LITTLE ANTI AMERICAN FEELING. HE ONLY SAW ONE VAGUELY ANTI AMERICAN PLACARD AND NOTED THAT A CRASHED B-52 WAS EXHIBITED IN A REMOTE CORNER OF THE ZOO AND DREW LESS ATTENTION THAN THE MONKEYS. THE WELL KNOWN INDIVIDUAL BOMB SHELTERS OF HANOI WERE FULL OF DEBRIS AND MANY UNARMED MALE AND FEMALE SOLDIERS WERE IN THE STREETS.

3. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND AID. MR BERENDONCK SAID THAT HE HAD HAD A LONG CONVERSATION WITH MAI VAN BO AND AN UNNAMED OFFICIAL

RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING. IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT THE DRV WAS VERY ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE AID FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO LESSEN ITS DEPENDENCE ON MOSCOW AND PEKING. HE HAD EXPLAINED TO MAI VAN BO THAT WEST GERMANY HAD NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH HANOI BUT THAT BONN VIEWED THE PROBLEM AS ONE OF TIMING AND WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA. HE HAD ALSO EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD NO PRECISE AMOUNT OF ECONOMIC AID TO OFFER BUT HAD SUGGESTED

THAT AT A LATER DATE TECHNICAL TALKS SHOULD BE HELD BETWEEN EXPERTS. MR BERENDONCK COMMENTED THAT THE DRV HAD BEEN OUT OF TOUCH

WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD FOR A LONG TIME AND HE BELIEVED AN EDUCATIVE EFFORT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO HELP HANOI UNDERSTAND THE PHILOSOPHY WHICH DIFFERENT COUNTRIES APPLIED TO AID AND THE MECHANISMS WHICH THEY HAD TO USE.

4. DRV/ SOVIET RELATIONS. MR BERENDONCK SAID HE WAS STRUCK BY THE DISTANCE AT WHICH THE DRV HELD SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES IN NORTH VIETNAM. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD NO MORE FREEDOM OR ACCESS THAN ANY OTHER DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE. THE ONLY PERSON ENJOYING SPECIAL PRIVILEGES WAS AMBASSADOR OBERG OF SWEDEN WHO WAS PERMITTED TO DRIVE HIS OWN CAR. MR BERENDONCK CONFIDED THAT THE GERMANY REPRESENTATIVE WITH WHOM HE HAD TALKED UNTIL THE WEEKENDS WAS LIVID OVER THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON HIS REPORTING. BERENDONCK HAD ALSO BEEN INFORMED THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD BEEN TRYING TO NO AVAIL TO OBTAIN FROM THE DRV THE MODIFICATIONS WHICH IT HAD ALLEGEDLY MADE IN SAM MISSILES WHICH HAD INCREASED THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN DECEMBER.

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5. CONCLUSION. MR BERENDONCK WHO HAS SERVED FIVE YEARS IN CAMBODIA, IS PROCEEDING TODAY TO VIENTIANE AND THENCE TO BANGKOK. HE SAID HE EXPECTED TO BE DEBRIEFED MORE FULLY BY THE EMBASSY IN BONN ONCE HE REACHED HOME. HE ASKED NO QUESTIONS ABOUT SOUTH VIETNAM AND OUR CONVERSATION WAS DESULTORY AND

CENTERED LARGELY ON THE PUBLICITY BEING GIVEN IN EUROPE TO LEFT-  
WING CLAIMS THAT THE GVN HAS 200,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS  
INCARCERATED IN ITS JAILS.  
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET  
NMAFVVZCZ

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS  
\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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BONN  
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